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## MISSIONS AND THE WORLD-WAR: A KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN

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HENRY CHURCHILL KING  
Oberlin College

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There is probably a growing conviction on the part of thoughtful Christian men the world over, that the incomparably terrible war through which we are passing and the world-crisis it involves suggest that the race's real trouble is that there has been no consistent and radical trial of the spirit and principles of Christ in the whole realm of human life. We are learning that we cannot be half-way Christians successfully. Here, too, Drummond's contention holds, that "the whole cross is more easily carried than the half." "The Church cannot go on," another has said, "preaching Jesus to individuals and Machiavelli to states. At last the high gods weary of such stupidity and send the deluge."

Now if it is a radically consistent and thoroughgoing Christianity which the world needs above all in these distracted times, *Christian missions should have definite suggestion and help to give*. For Christian missions, it is not too much to say, reveal Christianity at its best and purest.

Here, as nowhere else, Christian men are trying concretely to think of their Christian task in world-terms, in terms of humanity. And the war is demonstrating the necessity of such thinking today. There are no men who are more manifestly doing just that kind of thinking than our great missionary statesmen.

Here, as nowhere else, Christian men are seeing that they must bring a message of principles that do not hold simply for a single class or race, but universally and for all men. No narrow nationalism is here possible. And the war is daily proving the self-contradictory futility of trying to limit the application of great principles by national boundaries.

Here, as nowhere else, men should be able to speak of a God who is no tribal possession, but the Father of all men, and hence of a religion that has the right to be supreme and final for the entire human race.

Christian missions would plainly be doomed if we conceived our task less largely. That is a very significant fact when we weigh it, for it means that a victorious Christianity must be world-wide, humanity-wide, God-wide, in its outlook. And it is inconceivable that we should finally require less from a civilization that is to command the respect and loyalty of men.

We may trust, indeed, that what God is doing for men in this world-shaking crisis is bringing out into clear relief, in line with this missionary point of view, *the things that cannot be shaken*.

1. Have we not had, in the first place, a demonstration, on a world-scale, of what Wundt calls the "ambiguous" nature of civilization, so long as civilization is conceived as something apart from moral and religious ideals? "The ethical influence of civilization," he says, "is everywhere ambiguous. As it helps to deepen and refine man's moral ideas, so it opens up all sorts of paths which may lead him from the good. . . . The only legitimate inquiry is what *means* civilization places at the disposal of the will that has decided to follow the good." Now, this is the missionary viewpoint. The missionary seeks to permeate the civilization to which he goes with great new moral and religious ideals. How hideous a thing civilization can be even in Christendom, when "the will that has decided to follow the good" has been subtracted, men have had opportunity to see in these terrible days as never before. Has this generation learned rightly to use the enormous "means" placed at its disposal? Power is no blessing, but a terror, if it is not under control and is not guided to great and worthy ends. And the thoughtful man cannot help wondering today if the scientific dis-

covery of mighty forces has not advanced more rapidly than moral control. Is this generation fit to be trusted with such enormous power? Has it raised spirits which it cannot master? This war, with its scientific frightfulness, has made this question incomparably more pressing for the human race than ever before.

As Salomon Reinach has recently said:

At the future Congress among the seats reserved for the delegates of the great Powers one seat should remain vacant, as reserved to the greatest, the most redoubtable, though youngest of Powers: science in scarlet robes. That is the new fact; that is what diplomacy should not ignore; if that imminent and execrable scandal is to be averted; the whole of civilization falling a victim to science, her dearest daughter, brought forth and nurtured by her, now ready to deal her the death-blow. The all-important question is the muzzling of the mad dog. Science, as subservient to the will to destroy, must be put in chains; science must be exclusively adapted to the works of peace.

That means a necessary appeal to reason, to conscience, to moral and religious ideals. It means that *nothing can save civilization but thorough permeation with the truly Christian spirit*. Can the human race safely stop anywhere short of meeting the full Christian demands? This is surely no time for the religious forces to be faint-hearted. Our civilization must be Christian in more than name.

2. The second of the things that cannot be shaken, which God has been teaching us through this world-devastating war, is *the inescapable grip of the laws of God in the life of nations as well as of individuals*. All the belligerent nations, whether they will or not, are bearing witness to the universality of this law of cause and effect in the moral world. Let me take a single illustration, which I have used in another connection, where many might be given: The two greatest glories of the war—the splendid way in which the colonies of Great Britain, especially South Africa, have come to the aid of the mother-country, and the unshaken loyalty of Germany's working classes to the government—both alike go back to a fairly Christian regard for fairness and justice. Because, on the whole, England has been just and tolerant and generous in her dealing with her colonies; because the German government has given unmistakable evidence that it had been studying the needs

of the laboring classes and paternally caring for them (even though absolutism was served thereby), these results could be. Both nations were reaping what they had sown.

And that this war could come at all is evidence that the nations as a whole had not sown peace. They had not steadily and honestly and earnestly sought friendly relations nor had they been willing to fulfil the conditions that make such friendly relations possible.

Now this deepening conviction that nations, as well as individuals, may not escape the grip of the laws of God, but reap what they sow, for good and for ill, can hardly fail to make more penitent and humble the new civilization that is to be. That deepened conviction should mean much for the progress of the Kingdom of God throughout the earth.

3. The third one of the things which cannot be shaken, which God is teaching us in this sifting war, is the intolerable inconsistency of the selfish antagonism inevitably expressed in the war. The war is continually contradicting itself. Is there a single belligerent nation that is not somewhere using scientific principles, methods, and devices which it did not itself originate, but received from one of its present foes? Men need each other even in fighting each other. Is there a single scientific principle or method or device, appealed to or used by any belligerent, which did not owe its discovery to the scientific spirit—the willingness to get light from any quarter, and to take advantage of all that the whole race had hitherto accomplished at that particular point? Science, that is, as well as Christianity, becomes simply silly when one tries to draw lines of national antagonism within it. Is there a single principle or method appealed to by any of the belligerents which does not contradict itself when an attempt is made to limit its application—either for or against—to a single nation or group of belligerents? For example, the world has never seen scientific co-operation on so enormous a scale as has been forced upon the belligerents on both sides. Men clearly recognize the principle within individual nations and within allied groups of nations. But is it not clear beyond all peradventure that to stop co-operation there involves inherent self-contradiction?

So, too, the whole philosophy of exclusiveness and selfishness is self-defeating, whether for the individual or for the nation, or for groups within the nation. For the laws of God are laws of life, and in God's universe there is no such source of enlarging life as unselfish love, and the man or the nation that would be first of all must be first in service. Even from a merely commercial point of view, to destroy another nation economically is just so far to destroy at the same time that nation's power to be a profitable customer. Legitimate commerce is built on mutual benefit. To follow the present war with a hardly less bitter economic war—as many are proposing—would be folly unspeakable, and would sow once more the seeds of inevitable and self-destroying strife. The same thing holds of the exploiting of class by class within the nation.

4. To look at the matter from a little different point of view, any full and rational co-operation between human beings goes back to a fundamental moral and Christian principle—to, as Herrmann puts it, *the demand for "mental and spiritual fellowship among men, and mental and spiritual independence on the part of the individual."* Both sides of the demand are equally essential. Men must have fellowship with one another, and each must be true to his own best, and that best must be called out from each.

It may be fairly said, I think, that of the two groups of belligerents the Teutonic allies, on the whole, have put their main emphasis upon fellowship—the closest scientific co-operation, though within a restricted range; the entente allies, especially England and France, have put their emphasis upon mental and spiritual independence on the part of the individual. Both emphases are imperative. Only together do they adequately express the moral law for both individuals and nations. Each group has much to learn from the other. On the one hand, we may not go our antagonistic, wasteful, selfish ways with impunity as individuals or communities or nations. We *must* scientifically co-operate—and to the limits of humanity. On the other hand, we need to secure the freest initiative and the fullest contribution from each individual and class and nation and civilization. This is of the very essence of a true democracy among men. No nation or civilization on either

side is so rich that it can afford to blot out or to ignore the contributions of the rest. To attempt to apply the principle of co-operation in a spirit of insular, provincial, exclusive, or arrogant national selfishness is self-contradictory, and is to go back two thousand years in a virtual return to the "exclusive state" of antiquity, with its absolute domination of the individual and its utter denial of any obligations outside the state.

Certainly no new civilization will be worthy the name, or will command the loyalty of humanity that does not definitely seek to combine the gifts and graces of all the nations and civilizations, whether English or German or French or Austrian or Italian or Russian or Belgian or Japanese or Polish. This is and always must be the plain assumption of the great missionary enterprise whenever it is worthily conceived. And civilization, too, can never get away from this double demand of the moral law for both mental and spiritual fellowship among men, and mental and spiritual independence on the part of the individual.

5. Once more, I cannot shake off the conviction, which I have elsewhere expressed, that in this world-shaking war *God is sifting out the true from the false Christianity*. It is being forced home upon the reasons and consciences of men today that a Christianity primarily theological, a Christianity primarily emotionally mystical, a Christianity primarily ceremonial, a Christianity that adopts God as a kind of national prerequisite, and an Old Testament kind of Christianity, have all alike failed to stand the test of these crucial days. "It is altogether too rashly assumed," says Mr. H. G. Wells, "by people whose sentimentality outruns their knowledge, that Christianity is essentially an attempt to carry out the personal teachings of Christ. It is nothing of the sort, and no church authority will support that idea. Christianity . . . was and is theological religion." That statement, unfortunately, is more true than it ought to be. So far as it is true it must cease to be true. That kind of Christianity is being shaken to its base. All these kinds of Christianity, in fact, have been readily harmonized in all the belligerent nations in this war with a bitterness and hatred and ferocity utterly un-Christlike. Tested by Christ's own principle of fruit in life, they simply are not Christian. The only kind

of Christianity that can be said to have come out of this war unscathed is a Christianity that is a true reflection of the spirit and teachings of Christ, that is consequently ethical through and through, not tribal, but universal, in its appeal, and with an ethics capable of application as truly to nations and national relations as to individuals and individual relations.

Now it will mean enormous gains for the cause of Christ the world over if men learn in even fair degree this lesson of the sifting out by the war of the Christianity of Christ—if Christ is made truly, consciously supreme, in the Bible as well as out of it; supreme in our theological thinking; supreme in our tests of religious experience; supreme in our choice of means of worship and in the place given to them; supreme in national, no less than in individual, relations. Our missionary message would both simplify and deepen, and would gain immensely in both the solidity and universality of its appeal. It would be rid of a whole load of excrescences which now hinder its progress in every mission field.

6. So, applying the standards of Christ, it should be unmistakably plain, in the next place, that, however one expresses the *missionary aim*, so long as it is kept adequate at all, it *cannot be harmonized with a selfishly exclusive patriotism or nationalism*, or with an exclusive race pride and prejudice within the nation.

On the one hand, the war calls for a new respect for nationalism, for individual races; on the other, for an equally clear recognition of the fact that in all humanity's greater ideals and aims there can be no national or racial boundaries. There must be a universal co-operation, which can be universal just because there is appreciative respect for all that each nation and race has to offer. In like manner, to get upon the missionary fields a lot of national churches, even though they are not transplanted, and even if other denominationalisms could be put aside, is not enough, as the war shows. These desperate antagonisms of Christian nations and races are evidently not after the mind of Christ, and they make a true Christian conquest of the world impossible. *The missionary is seeking the true reign of Christ in all the world* and in all the departments of its life. That is impossible except in the proportion in which the spirit of Christ is really ruling in the thoughts and



purposes of men. That aim we cannot honestly take on unless we seek it, first of all, in our own lives.

*The business of missions, again, may be said to be the reverent sharing with others of our best—of what Christ has come to mean to us—of our best convictions and ideals and motives and hopes, in full appreciation of the best in the people to whom we go. Is it possible for us rightly to share this Christlike best if we are implicitly contradicting it in any other relations?*

*Our supreme missionary message, too—our great good tidings—is of Love at the heart of the world; of a God who in his very being is infinite, self-giving Love, joying in our joy and achievement, suffering in our suffering and sin; of the love of God revealed in Christ—an endlessly seeking, suffering, forgiving, redeeming love of God for all men. And the essence of religion is sharing in the life of God—sharing in such infinite, patient, unwearied, un baffled, seeking, suffering love. Only such sharing is eternal life. We simply cannot deliver that message with hate and pride and prejudice and exclusiveness in our own hearts. We are ministers of reconciliation. Can that reconciliation have a limited aim? In harmony with the whole spirit and teaching of Christ we are trying, in our missionary endeavor, to bring the people to whom we go to this supreme enthronement of a Christlike love in all the realms of their life—to Christ's own purpose of universal good-will. Can we fail to show it ourselves?*

7. But it is not enough that our missionary endeavor itself should be made consistent. Surely, once more, this world-crisis should not pass without *bringing the common standards of our civilization into far greater consistency with our missionary motive and aim.*

For the missionary cause involves the attempt genuinely to *win* other men to conviction and purpose and love. There can be here no thought of domination; and in the precise degree in which domination comes in, in that degree the true missionary purpose is defeated. As Christian missions have gone forward and their implications have been made clear, the attitude of the missionary himself has perforce become more Christian. And this attitude foreshadows the ideal we must all hold before us in all race relations. I happen to have in my hands just now, for example, the proof of

an article by another, in which is discussed the missionary's attitude toward the people to whom he goes—in this case, the East Indians. The writer refers to "the haughty contempt" often revealed by the man of the West. He says:

His patronizing air and open condescension are always in evidence. The contagion of this spirit often seriously affects the missionary too. How many of the missionaries of the West meet these people on terms of fellowship, brotherhood, and equality? . . . The only way to real success is by the determined cultivation of a genuine appreciation of all that is worthy and admirable in the life and type of character of his people. . . . There must be added to all other qualities a love that "thinketh no evil," that "covereth a multitude of sins," that minimizes all that is unattractive, and magnifies everything that is commendable and winsome in the people.

Does this not point to *the inevitable road we must take in all race relations*? The necessary background of the Golden Rule is an understanding sympathy. A true historical spirit ought to help at just that point, for to understand is to forgive. As Orville Dewey, truly reflecting the teaching of Christ, says of individuals, so of races:

Every relation to mankind, of hate or scorn or neglect, is full of vexation and torment. There is nothing to do with men but to love them; to contemplate their virtues with admiration, their faults with pity and forbearance, and their injuries with forgiveness. Task all the ingenuity of your mind to devise some other thing, but you never can find it. To hate your adversary will not help you; to kill him will not help you; nothing within the compass of the universe can help you, but to love him.

This is the one infallible road we must all be willing to travel if Christ is to prevail.

Thus this war, though it has brought many things hard to forget or to forgive, makes more clear than ever the truth of what a great editor wrote before the war:

The great field for humanitarianism in the future—for that matter, the one great direction of true civilization—is not the field of mere religious propaganda, but *the adjustment of race differences*. The task is to find honorable and peaceful ways of lessening the dislike that most races of men have for other races—to find ways of living and working together in a world over which no one race can rule, in our stage of civilization, now long past the tribal organization. And this must be done without causing national decay.

We shall certainly need to bring to bear anew upon this problem, made infinitely more acute by the war, the love of Christ which moves the missionary to take immense pains to gain appreciative understanding, sympathy, and love for the people to whom he goes.

For we shall not idly drift into a Christlike love for men, but we shall need to use steadily and consciously with ourselves *Christ's great motives to the loving life*: the motive of the unity of our own whole inner life, so that every sin is its own worst punishment because it tends to reproduce its kind in ourselves, and so that every bit of righteousness, on the other hand, is its own best reward; the motive of the complete fulfilment of the law of God as the law of life—filling it full, carrying the spirit of the law into the remotest ramifications, into the inmost spirit of the life; the motive that comes from the thought of the other man as brother, indissolubly knit up with our lives, in great essentials just like us, and of priceless value and inevitable sacredness in the sight of God; and the motive of God's own fatherly love. These great motives still hold, and permanently hold, and are all of the very essence of Christ's spirit and teaching—of that eternal Kingdom that cannot be shaken. We shall certainly pay a bitter penalty in our own life, individual and national, for every departure from the spirit of Christ, for every refusal to come up to that spirit. The war has demonstrated that afresh. The cause of Christian missions has no greater concern than that a Christlike love of man to man, of nation to nation, of race to race, should spread over the world. To adopt a smaller aim is really to abandon the missionary purpose altogether.

For, if the missionary enterprise is justified at all, if at its best it truly represents Christianity in any fair degree, then *we must be ready to apply the fundamental aim of Christian missions to the whole of the world-life* and to the relations of all the nations. We are seeking in missions the supremacy of the spirit of Christ in all the relations of life—to bring all men and institutions and interests and causes under the dominion of Christ. But if Christ is the supreme revelation of God, he must be at the same time the supreme revelation of men, of life, of religion, of world-aims, of the eternal purposes of God. And only when we strive with all our souls, without half-

hearted inconsistency, radically and absolutely, everywhere to seek the reign of Christ, may we be sure that we shall find "the Universe on the side of the will," giving the will "the force and the edge suitable." We are otherwise fighting at cross-purposes with God.

8. Finally, it should not be possible that the Christian church should go through such a world-crisis as the present and not learn lessons which vitally affect its world-task. It is quite conceivable that *missionary reconstruction on an undreamed-of scale may result*. Some such reconstruction ought to result. Can we at all anticipate even briefly its lines?

a) First of all, it ought not to be possible for the Christian church to see the unbelievable extent to which scientific co-operation has been forced upon the nations in this war without drawing the inevitable inference that *co-operation among all the forces of righteousness is demanded to a degree so far hardly imagined*. This war has disclosed a horrible vision of the breaking down of restraints which civilization had been centuries in building up. It has shown, as we have seen, that the destructive forces have been immensely augmented and developed with pitiless scientific rigor. And it has revealed a bottomless pit of possibilities of further scientific destruction and of the scientific intensification of a world-wide spy system and hostility along many lines that bid fair to make decent human relations well-nigh impossible. Is this generation to prove wise enough and great enough not only to check these destructive agencies, but positively to replace them with agencies of constructive good-will? Against such terrible possibilities as the war has disclosed there is no adequate defense but a moral and religious one. This is no time, therefore, for the forces of righteousness to indulge in divisive differences. They must get together. The mission fields, in particular, must give examples of co-operation so thoroughly thought out and scientifically developed as to be comparable with the best that any belligerent nation has shown under the terrible pressure of this world-war.

b) Now the Christian forces will simply not be able to meet this constructive world-challenge without such co-operation. And they cannot rise to that co-operation, as has been already implied, without *an immensely greater emphasis upon the ethical and social*

*elements of the Christian message* in every relation and realm of life. As we have already seen, it is not a matter of indifference whether our Christianity is to be the Christianity of Christ. We are to make some clear discriminations as to our religious aims, and are definitely to abandon an Old Testament type of Christianity on the mission field as well as at home. Our teaching in both places is to be plainly and unmistakably loyal to the inner spirit of Christ himself. And it will not be loyal to Christ if we are teaching any kind of religion which a man can take on without fundamental, radical, universal good-will. The solicitous, thoughtful care which some of the nations have been showing for the common, homely, daily needs and comforts and joys of their least-favored citizens may well stir missionary supporters and workers to a still more Christlike pity and ministry.

c) It is one of the deeply disappointing things in this war that the churches of Christ have on the whole counted so little for international good-will. Is that to continue to be the case? It will continue to be the case unless there is not only patient, passionate pursuit of good-will on the part of individuals the world over, but also some definitely constructive agency through which that good-will can act. And the churches must set themselves to build up such an agency, through which the Christian spirit can be brought to bear upon all the sore and burning questions of the after-war period. Should not our Christian mission boards, with their already established international relations and with their high, unselfish aims, afford the natural and best agency for this purpose? It would not be the first time that the missionary cause has given to its supporting churches more than it has received from them. Perhaps the most significant piece of work under Christian auspices for maintaining right relations between the nations in this war has been done by the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association in the prison camps.

d) On the mission field all this should mean *such a unifying of Christian forces in work as the world has never yet seen*. The exigencies of mission work itself have already shown in many cases the imperative necessity for such unification; for example, in educational work, if Christian educational institutions are not to be quite

outclassed by state-supported schools. The war has demonstrated, further, the necessity of a Christian unity that can rise above national and racial antagonisms if our missionary work is not to seem a humiliating self-contradiction. For a religion that cannot conquer race prejudices and antagonisms is not worthy of God or of Christ or of world-missions. Are we to be large enough and fine enough to make such far greater unification of work possible?

e) We have had ghastly visions, too, in this war, of the ugliness and sordidness of arrogant and selfish nationalism and racial pride that is blind to the indispensable values of other peoples. We may hope that the very ghastliness of these visions may give us all *a new sensitiveness to the values of alien peoples* and a new determination sacredly to respect and guard all those values in the peoples to whom we bring our missionary message. As surely as we see that the world's civilization must suffer loss wherever the values of any people are blotted out, so surely must our appreciation of Christianity itself lack something of perfection if we fail to call out the unique, honest reaction upon the message of Christ, of any race which God has made. May the war make possible to us all a presentation of Christianity in missions more reverent than ever before of the best in the peoples to whom we go!

f) In almost every mission field, too, there will be felt after the war the definite *problem of personal reconciliations* and of the *reknitting of many personal relations*.

If the mission forces come to this Christian duty humbly and penitently (for it is impossible that the fault should be *all* on one side), it may be expected that the doing of it will carry them far beyond the degree of co-operation and unity previously attained to *a deeper and more spiritual unity*, to a unity more worthy of the name of our common sorrowing and forgiving Redeemer.

Is it not possible, too, that the almost religious sense of loving unity that seems to have come to more than one of the belligerent nations in their experiences of common sacrificial endeavor may itself suggest the possibility and the way to a still wider, more unselfish, and more Christlike unity of all men—surely of all Christian men?

Just because we shall have to resist great natural tendencies to draw off from one another along national lines we may hope that we shall see all the more clearly the necessity of extending to all our relations that full Christlike spirit which we know to be incumbent upon us in our relations to the peoples to whom we go as missionaries. And this spirit will tend to flow back upon the home churches and to do there also its healing work.

Certainly the world everywhere never more needed the religion of Christ than now, to give to men deathly sick of strife the deep abiding motive and dynamic for universal, unselfish, constructive good-will—for “a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.”